

**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM IN VENEZUELA**

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### INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM IN VENEZUELA

In the continuing struggle between the Free World and the Soviet Bloc, between democracy and Communism, it would be a dangerous error for any particular country to feel immune from the threat of subversion because its own Communist Party is a small one. Complacency and over-confidence are preludes to disaster, particularly the belief that the danger posed by a Communist Party depends on its size.

The Communist danger in any particular country can be likened to an iceberg--what can be seen (the local Communist Party) is only a small part of the whole (the international Communist movement). And as in the case of an iceberg, the danger comes not so much from the part that can be seen as from the fact that it is attached to a vast hidden mass.

This Communist iceberg and its attendant dangers have often been described but never better than by Almirante Don Carlos Penna Botto in addressing a hemispheric conference in Rio de Janeiro on 22 August 1955:

"...el Partido Comunista, existente en cada país, no es sino un órgano del Partido Comunista Internacional, destinado a trabajar, única y exclusivamente, en favor del Imperialismo Soviético. Es un cáncer, es un foco infeccioso que envenena el organismo de cada Nación, preparando dentro de ésta un grupo de traidores prontos a solapar, a subvertir, a crear odio y choques, a desmoralizar, a apuñalar el país por la espalda, en el momento considerado como oportuno por los fanáticos del Kremlin....El Partido Comunista en cada país, no plantea apenas principios filosóficos y doctrinarios, sino que se destina, principalmente, a luchar por todos los medios en pro del Imperialismo Soviético."

The problem of complacency, the failure to understand that Communist Parties everywhere are closely subordinated to Kremlin desires and dictates, is critical today in Venezuela. There, after many years of illegality, the Partido Comunista Venezolano (PCV) re-emerged as one of the country's accepted political parties following the downfall of the Perez Jimenez regime on 24 January 1958.

Taking advantage of a new respectability gained by its participation in the struggle against Perez and by its representation on the Junta Patriótica (the underground civilian organization which led the fight against Perez), the PCV has been working

hard to foster the illusion that it is as patriotic and nationalistic as other Venezuelan parties.

The danger comes from the fact that some Venezuelans appear to have accepted the strange idea that Venezuelan Communists are somehow different from other Communists, and that there is no reason to consider the PCV as subversive or foreign-dominated. The PCV, its leaders are claiming, is now and always has been a party with completely domestic origins, without strings to any foreign organization or country. Any assertions to the contrary, the PCV claims, are simply lies spread by its political opponents and rivals.

The fact is, of course, that nothing could be further from the truth. The PCV, like all Communist Parties, except that of Yugoslavia, is a completely subservient tool of Moscow. Like the controlled puppet it is, the PCV follows today, as it has in the past, every twist and turn of the Kremlin line. It denounces and praises whatever Moscow denounces and praises, and obediently sends its representatives to international Communist meetings to receive the latest Kremlin orders. Examination of the record reveals the many evidences of links between the PCV and Moscow.

#### Beginnings of Venezuelan Communism

Moscow's direction and control of Communist agitation and organization in Venezuela began even before a party had been established there. In 1927 a large number of Communist and leftist trade unionists were invited to Moscow in connection with the Xth Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. One of them was Ricardo Martinez, an exiled Venezuelan, who was destined to be the principal Moscow agent of Venezuelan Communism until 1941, when he finally returned to his own country.

During their sojourn in Moscow, these leaders (Eudocio Ravines, Armando Bazan and Julio Portocarrera of Peru, Victorio Codovilla of Argentina, Astrogildo Perayra and Karrick of Brazil, German List Arzubide of Mexico, Julio Antonio Mella of Cuba, and Martinez), participated in a meeting, also attended by Alexander Losovsky and Humbert-Droz of the Comintern, at which plans were made regarding strategy for the spread of Communism in Latin America.

After the Comintern's Vth Congress in 1928, its South American Secretariat was moved from Moscow to Buenos Aires. The Secretariat controlled the operations and policies of all Latin American Communist Parties, and also supervised the activities of all peripheral organizations established by local Parties,

such as branches of the International Red Aid, Communist Youth International, and Anti-Imperialist League.

The Secretariat's first major hemispheric activity appears to have been the convoking of the First Conference of Latin American Communist Parties, held in Buenos Aires on 1-12 June 1929. In attendance were 36 delegates representing the Parties of Argentina (Codovilla), Bolivia, Brazil (Gabinetti), Colombia (Machaca), Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala (Villalba), Mexico (Suarez), Panama, Paraguay, Peru (Saco), Uruguay, and Venezuela (Martinez). Also present were representatives of the Comintern, the Buenos Aires Bureau (Guralsky), the Young Communist International (Ghitor and Peters), and the Communist Party of the United States.

The exact extent of authority wielded by the Buenos Aires Bureau is not known, but it apparently was not complete. During the 1920's and early 1930's, for example, the Communist Parties in the Caribbean area are said to have received all or part of their instructions through New York, and the US Communist leader Joseph Zach Kornfeder was active in Party affairs in Colombia and Venezuela during this period.

The Venezuelan Communist Party appears to have been first organized formally in 1931 by students who had participated in the 1928 general strike against Gomez. Another exile student group headed by Gustavo Machado Morales formed at about the same time a Partido Revolucionario Venezolano, which became part of the Communists' continental "Anti-Imperialist League." During the early 1930's Venezuelan Communists were represented at various international gatherings, but it was not until the VIIth Comintern Congress in 1935 (which Martinez and Ribas (fmu) attended) that the Venezuelan Communist Party, previously recognized only as a "sympathetic" party, was admitted to full Comintern membership.

Membership of a political party in an international association does not necessarily mean, of course, that the party has surrendered itself to foreign direction and control. The member parties of the Socialist International, for example, remain entirely independent, and the association serves merely as a medium for the exchange of ideas.

Membership in the international Communist movement is quite a different matter. Upon joining the Comintern the individual Communist Party had formally to accept Comintern (i.e., Kremlin) supremacy in all things. It had to pledge to act and work as directed by Comintern headquarters and in accordance with its decisions and programs, and had to pledge further that it would render "every possible assistance" to the Soviet Union.

In other words, the acceptance by the Comintern in 1935 of the PCV as a full member was Moscow's way of acknowledging the PCV's pledge of unreserved loyalty and obedience to the Soviet Union and to the Soviet Communist Party. Dimitri Manuilsky, one-time head of the Comintern, in addressing the 1928 Moscow meeting of Latin American Communists, made this point very clear when he said:

"Above all our force must be used in defense of the Soviet Union. This is the first duty of the parties, of the individual Communists, of our sympathizers, friends, and followers. The mark of a good Communist shall be precisely this: the fervor with which he defends the Soviet Union and its international policy, his eagerness to praise its works, the emphasis with which he teaches the people that the only just policy is that of the USSR, and that all other nations are unjust, provoking wars, and leading to world-wide conflagration....The very soul of the Communist party's strategy is the vigorous defense of the Soviet Union; there can be but one policy, that of Russia, of Stalin. No Communist may have the right to defend any other. This must be clear to you all; remember it."

Following the death of Gomez in 1935, Venezuelan leftists of all complexions united to form the Partido Democratico Nacional (PDN). Internal dissension soon arose, however, when non-Communists led by Romulo Betancourt insisted that the PDN's Communist members sever all ties with Moscow. The Communists' refusal to do this led to a split in 1937, at which time the Communists left the PDN to form their own Communist Party. Although various splits have occurred and numerous factions formed within Communist ranks since 1938, the present (1959) Partido Comunista Venezolano (PCV) stems directly from this move.

Throughout the years the Venezuelan Communists have faithfully followed every twist and turn of the internal Communist line--perhaps the best possible indicator of their subservience to, and direction by, Moscow. As with other Parties, World War II provides the most striking illustration of this. During the early part of the war, the Venezuelan Communists denounced the conflict as "imperialist," and Communist members of the Venezuelan Students Federation withdrew rather than sign an anti-fascist manifesto which the Federation issued. But with the German attack on the Soviet Union, the Venezuelan Communists dutifully changed their attitude and became the most violent opponents of the Axis.

Another guide is the adulation accorded Stalin in his later years by Communists everywhere. PCV publications were filled

with lavish praise of the Russian dictator during his lifetime and, upon his death, with lamentations and expressions of grief. Yet, with no apparent embarrassment, the PCV with equal fervor echoed the denunciation of Stalin initiated by Khrushchev in a speech to the 20th CPSU Congress in 1956.

### Disunity and Unity

In 1944 a split occurred within the PCV between a faction led by Juan Bautista Fuenmayor and one headed by Gustavo Machado and Luis Miguelena (the Machamiques) over the issue of support for the Medina government. Both factions sent delegations to neighboring countries, especially to Cuba, then the center of Caribbean Communist activities, to solicit the support of the international Communist movement; and both groups also besieged the newly arrived Soviet Ambassador to Caracas. Moscow's certification of the Fuenmayor faction as the approved party in Venezuela was published in Vicente Lombardo Teledano's paper, El Popular, and in the Cuban Communist monthly Fundamentos in the form of an "Open Letter to Venezuelan Communists," written by US Communist leader William Z. Foster, which expressed support for the Fuenmayor group.

This split was finally healed at a Unity Conference held in Caracas in November 1946, at which the Fuenmayor group, the independent Communists and a part of the Machamiques united to form what was recognized by the Communist movement as the PCV. As in the previous case, recognition was extended through the device of a letter written by Foster. Dated 23 June 1947, the letter was addressed to Fuenmayor, Machado and Luis Eniro Arrieta, whom it congratulated for "the historical conquest you have achieved by establishing a united Communist movement in Venezuela."

The Unity Conference clearly revealed once again how dependent on international Communism the PCV was, for the conference was not one of Venezuelans only. Also participating were Communists--so-called fraternal delegates--from the Communist Parties of US, Spain, Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Chile. Particularly important were Dionisio Encina Rodriguez, Secretary General of the Mexican Communist Party, and Eladio Ladislao Gonzalez Carvajal Delgado, Secretary of Relations on the National Executive Committee of the Cuban Communist Party (i.e., Partido Socialista Popular), who played major roles in bringing the divergent factions together. Gonzalez, in fact, was present as the agent of the Comintern's Bureau del Caribe, which had sent him to Venezuela some months before the conference was held for the specific purpose of bringing about unity.

### The Caribbean Bureau

As early as 1928 the Comintern had established a South American Secretariat in Buenos Aires as its regional control organism. Later, Moscow ordered the establishment of a Buro del Caribe to ensure a closer coordination of the activities of the parties subordinated to it, to administer Comintern affairs and to handle the distribution of Communist propaganda in the Caribbean area. (It is not known whether the Buro was a branch of the South American Secretariat or responsible directly to Moscow.) With its headquarters successively in Bogota, Caracas and Havana, the Bureau was directed by Gustavo Machado Morales and Salvador de la Plaza of Venezuela, Gilberto Vieira of Colombia, Blas Roca of Cuba, and the general secretaries of the area parties.

When the Comintern was ostensibly dissolved by the Soviet Government in 1943, the Buro del Caribe appears to have become inactive, although the South American Secretariat, now called the Buro Political Sud Americano, continued as an organ of Soviet control. By 1948, however, a new organism, the Circulo del Caribe, had been created. Having the same leadership as the defunct Buro del Caribe, the Circulo had responsibility for Soviet political, propaganda, social, labor and intelligence activities throughout the Caribbean area and, during the existence of the Cominform, served as a branch of that organization.

The PCV had a close link with the Circulo and Buro Political in the person of Gustavo Machado, who was not only a member of both but also one of the principal leaders of the PCV. His brother Eduardo, a PCV Central Committee member, served as a direct agent of the Cominform, as he had previously served the Comintern.

### Other Soviet Control Media

During the years when Venezuela maintained diplomatic relations with certain Bloc countries, Soviet control of the PCV was re-enforced by the supervision maintained by the Soviet Embassy. PCV members were frequent visitors to the Embassy, while Embassy personnel could often be seen in the company of Venezuelan Communists. When the outlawing of the PCV in 1950 forced the Machado brothers into exile in Mexico, they immediately established and maintained during the ensuing seven years extremely close contacts with Bloc, especially Soviet, diplomats in Mexico.

The contacts in Caracas between Bloc diplomats and PCV members went far beyond the mere social association of persons



sharing similar political ideas. When the Venezuelan Government finally severed diplomatic relations with Bloc countries in the summer of 1952, it did so because it had obtained incontrovertible proof that the Soviet and Polish Embassies had been involved in shipments of contraband arms received by Venezuelan Communists from Czechoslovakia. The government further charged that the Soviet Embassy in Mexico (where the Machado brothers were then in exile) had been openly giving financial aid to Venezuelan Communist groups plotting the overthrow of the Caracas government.

Following the break, PCV leader Pompeyo Marquez published in the clandestine PCV organ Cuadernos de Educacion an article in which he lamented that "the severing of relations this past June with the Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak People's Republic severely hindered the clandestine work of the Party." This could only be interpreted as a tacit admission that the Bloc embassies had, in fact, been secretly aiding the PCV as the government charged.

But Moscow is not dependent on regional organisms or diplomatic missions to exercise its control over the PCV and other Latin American Communist Parties. Whenever it is deemed necessary, leaders of a particular party or of a number of parties can be summoned to Moscow to receive orders directly. In late 1952, for example, 11 leaders from seven Latin American countries were ordered to Moscow to attend the 19th Congress of the CPSU. There they were instructed to continue their work of infiltration, propaganda and incitation of civil disturbances on a still broader scale.

At this meeting the Soviets established an 8-man Latin American hierarchy which was authorized to make tactical decisions, although key directions were still to come from Moscow. These included were men who had proven their loyalty to Moscow by long years of service: Vicente Lombardo Toledano (Mexico), Luis Carlos Prestes (Brazil), Rodolfo Ghioldi and Victorio Codovilla (Argentina), Blas Roca (Cuba), Carlos Contreras Labarca (Chile), Eugenio Gomez (Uruguay), and Gustavo Machado (Venezuela).

Today, when the PCV is proclaiming its strictly national character, Machado denies vigorously that he attended these Moscow sessions. The truth is that Machado was there under the pseudonym of Felipe Bolanos.

The 21st CPSU Congress in January 1959 provided yet another opportunity for Machado to obtain instructions directly from his Moscow superiors. During an interview in late October 1958 with a correspondent of the West German magazine Der Spiegel,



Machado revealed that he planned to attend the congress and that although he would pay his way there, Moscow would stand the expense of his return trip. He also stated that the PCV was being used by Moscow as an experiment in self-sufficiency so that the PCV at that moment was not receiving any outside help. Machado made the statement to support the PCV's claim of independence from foreign direction, although the statement is also clearly a tacit admission that Moscow had previously been assisting the PCV financially.

Earlier in 1958 (May), Jesus Faria and Eduardo Machado flew to Moscow to report on the new political situation in Venezuela arising from the ouster of Perez and to obtain orders on the actions the PCV should take to secure re-establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations between the USSR and Venezuela. Machado returned to Caracas in about a month, but Faria did not return until 10 September, having spent time in Czechoslovakia, a month's medical rest in the Soviet Union, and a month in China as a guest of the Chinese Communist Party.

#### Inter-Party Relations

There have been many contacts in the past between leaders of the PCV and the leaders of other Latin American Communist Parties. Many of these, as examples already cited indicate, have been in connection with Moscow's control of the international Communist movement. However, there have been, and are today, many other contacts which, if they fail to reveal the full extent of inter-party relationships, do provide additional evidence to disprove the PCV's current claim that it has a strictly national character.

During its years of illegality from June 1950 to January 1958, relations were especially close with the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), since the center of PCV exile activity was in Mexico City. The latter, it may be noted, was selected as the place of residence of many of the PCV's top exiled leaders, including Gustavo and Eduardo Machado, whose entrance into Mexico was sponsored by Vicente Lombardo Toledano and Diego Rivera, both fervent Communists.

In May 1954, for example, the Venezuelan Government learned that the Soviets were using the PCM to channel instructions to PCV exiles. One PCM leader, J. Encarnacion Perez, is known to have returned to Mexico from Moscow with instructions on how underground Communist groups in Venezuela were to function.

Shortly thereafter, Gustavo Machado joined with Encina and Lombardo of Mexico, Horacio Fuentes and Gonzalez Carvajal of Cuba and Eduardo Mora Valverde of Costa Rica in organizing

a committee to aid Communist political refugees similar to the Secorro Rojo Internacional, which had earlier existed in Guatemala and Cuba.

During this same period other principal centers of PCV exile activity were Cuba and Panama. PCV members who visited either Havana or Panama City invariably did so as guests of the local Communist Parties (Partido Socialista Popular in Cuba and Partido del Pueblo in Panama). In Panama, for example, the PCV maintained a permanent representative for liaison purposes whose expenses were entirely met by the Panamanian Party. The contacts between the PCV and Cuban Communists were simply a continuation of the link established as early as 1924 when Gustavo Machado, then working in Cuba for a sugar company, founded Venezuela Libre in association with Cuban Communists Jose Antonio Mella, Ruben Martinez Villen and Juan Marinello.

Close relations also exist between the PCV and its sister Parties in neighboring Brazil and Colombia. During its period of exile the PCV received financial and other material support from the Brazilian Communist Party, which also authorized PCV members to participate in its activities. The link with the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) has existed since the early 1940's when Gustavo Machado, then in exile in Bogota, became an honorary member of the PCC. The continued existence of close PCV-PCC relations is evidenced by the arrival in Caracas in the spring of 1958 of Guillermo Vargas Saavedra of the PCC, who was sent to aid the PCV and to act as a liaison channel between it and his own Party. Later in the year, the PCV officially invited Gilberto Vieira White, PCC Secretary General, to visit Caracas as its guest.

But perhaps the inter-relationships of various Parties is best shown by the Fortuny affair. In early June 1958, shortly after the arrival in Moscow of Jesus Faria and Eduardo Machado, it was learned that Guatemalan Communists Jose Manuel Fortuny, Bernardo Alvarado Monzon and his wife, Irma Chavez de Alvarado, were preparing to leave the USSR for Venezuela. Fortuny at least left the Soviet Union although he did not reach Venezuela.

According to what he told Brazilian police later, Fortuny traveled from Moscow to Rio de Janeiro. On 7 August he went to Montevideo in accordance with instructions from Mexico, relayed through Mario Fiorani, an Italian Communist, that he go to the Uruguayan capital to contact PCV leader Eduardo Gallegos Mancera. Gallegos gave him a letter of recommendation to an official of the Venezuelan Embassy in Rio, as well as instructions to contact Jorge Amado, a Stalin Prize winner, who would help him

during his stay in Brazil. On 31 August Fortuny returned to Rio where he was arrested on 3 October for having false papers.

During questioning by Brazilian police, Fortuny admitted his contacts with Amado and said that they resulted from advice given him by Gallegos and Juan Bernardo Arismendi (also a Venezuelan Communist). In Fortuny's notebook were found the names and addresses of Gallegos and of Cavaldo Trejo, First Secretary of the Venezuelan Embassy in Rio and presumably the addressee of Gallegos' letter of recommendation.

The Fortuny incident illustrates but one facet of the close relations between Guatemalan and Venezuelan Communists. Just as Venezuelan Reds went in large numbers to Mexico City when the PCV was outlawed, so too did Guatemalan Reds when the victory of the Castillo Armas movement toppled the Arbenz regime. Victor Manuel Gutierrez, the Red Guatemalan labor leader, for example, established intimate relations with the Machado brothers and other leading PCV figures.

These relations have continued since the PCV re-emerged on the Venezuelan political scene, as the Fortuny incident illustrates. The PCV also arranged for Caracas' Central University to offer a professorship to Juan Jose Arevalo, the former Guatemalan president, who set the stage for the avowedly pro-Communist Arbenz regime and who serves as an inspiration for all Latin American Communists even though he has never joined a Communist Party. At the present time Arevalo has still not entered Venezuela but is expected momentarily to do so.

#### Red Labor Ties

The labor movement has always been a constant source of contact between Venezuelan Communists and international Communism. The Latin American trade unionists who were in Moscow in 1927 in connection with the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, met and approved preliminary plans for establishing the first hemispheric labor organization. The meeting, which was presided over by Alexander Losovsky, then head of the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU, or Profintern), selected Ricardo Martinez of Venezuela as the resident Latin American representative at RILU's Moscow headquarters.

The manifesto convoking a Latin American labor congress was addressed "To the Workers' Organizations of Latin America and to the Proletariat in General," and was issued by a second meeting of Latin American trade unionists held in Moscow in April 1928. Those present signed the manifesto as representatives of Communist-controlled labor organizations in Mexico, Cuba, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Venezuela (Union Obrera Revolucionaria).

The conference met in Montevideo in May 1928 attended by Communist representatives from 15 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico (David A. Siqueiros, Elias Barrios, Samuel Rodriguez Cerilla), Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Martinez, representing the Agrupaciones Sindicales Revolucionarias). The result of the meeting was the formal establishment of the Confederacion Sindical Latino Americana (CSLA) as the hemispheric affiliate of RILU. Martinez served as a member of CSLA's Secretariat or General Council as well as CSLA's representative on RILU's Executive Committee.

The CSLA was never very effective and it ceased to exist in 1936. On 8 September 1938, a hemispheric labor conference was convoked by Mexico's Vicente Lombardo Toledano, which was attended by 37 delegates from 12 countries. From this conference there emerged a new Communist front organization, Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina (CTAL), which is today the hemispheric branch of the Moscow-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The 1938 meeting elected Lombardo Secretary General of the new organization, a post he still holds.

In Venezuela the leading affiliate has been the Federation de Trabajadores del Distrito Federal y Estado Miranda (FTDFEM), controlled by the Black (dissident) Communist group, Partido Revolucionario del Proletariado (Comunista)--PRPe. Rodolfo Quintero, long the leading member of FTDFEM, represented that organization at CTAL conferences in 1946, 1948 and 1953. At the 4th Congress, held in Santiago, Chile in 1953, he was elected to a 3-year term on CTAL's Central Committee. Quintero also has attended WFTU meetings in 1951 (Budapest), 1953 (Vienna--along with Luis Ciano Cerezo) and 1954, and has served as a member of the administrative committee of WFTU's Trade Union International of Oil, Chemical and Allied Workers. After the 1951 congress in Budapest, he toured Hungary as a guest of the Hungarian trade unions.

As an FTDFEM leader and head of its largest affiliate, the waiters' Union, Rafael Bracca, like Quintero, has been associated with WFTU and CTAL. In March 1953 he attended the CTAL Congress in Santiago, and in September 1955 he was present at the 2nd International Conference of Food and Tobacco Industry Workers, Hotel, Cafe and Restaurant Employees, which was held under WFTU auspices at Sofia. In 1957 he was a member of the WFTU General Council, with Jose Rosario Diaz serving as Venezuela's deputy member.

In 1957 Oscar T. Merchant, then president of FTDFEM, was the Venezuelan delegate to WFTU's 4th Congress, held in Leipzig

on 4-14 October. Before the Congress, Rodrigo Rojas Andrade, a Chilean Communist labor leader, was delegated by WFTU-CTAL to visit Venezuela and Colombia to arouse interest in the Congress.

The connections of Venezuelan Communism with the international Communist labor movement are well illustrated by the career of Jesus Faria, the present PCV Secretary General and long its specialist on union affairs. Faria attended CTAL congresses in 1942 (Mexico City), 1944 (Cali, Colombia), 1948 (Mexico City), and 1950 (Montevideo). At the latter meeting (27 March-1 April), Lombardo announced that the CTAL had approved a plan for creating regional committees; and the Caribbean Regional Committee, covering Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Venezuela, was placed under the direction of Faria together with Lazaro Pena and Faustino Calcanes, both prominent Cuban Communists.

At CTAL's 1953 Congress in Santiago, Faria, although confined to a Venezuelan jail at the time, was elected a member of the CTAL Executive Committee. He managed to send a message to the Congress, in which he expounded a straight Moscow line: denunciation of Yankee imperialistic exploitation of Venezuela through Standard Oil Company and condemnation of America's war-mongering policies.

In 1949 Faria made the pilgrimage to Moscow as a guest of the Soviet trade union organization. There he attended the Xth Soviet Trade Union Congress, to which he delivered an attack on "North American Imperialism." Radio Moscow, on 13 May 1949, beamed to Latin America part of a Faria article entitled "North American Imperialism in Venezuela," apparently an adaptation of his speech, which castigated the ruling military junta as a lackey of the US. During his stay in Moscow, he sent back to Tribuna Popular, the PCV organ, a series of articles relating the glories of the Soviet Union and the enviable position of the Soviet worker.

On his return trip Faria visited Sofia to attend the funeral of Georgi Dimitrov, and also participated in a WFTU meeting in Milan, where he was named one of three members of a committee (the others were from the USSR and Rumania) to prepare and disseminate a report on the accomplishments of oil workers throughout the world. Faria later became Latin American director of the Trade Union International of Chemical, Oil and Allied Workers, whose organization was decided upon at the Milan meeting.

In 1948 Faria led a delegation of Venezuelan Communists (Theodoro Gusman Landaeta, Manuel Taborda, Maximo Gutierrez, Porfirio Marval, and Antonio Garcia) to the Congress of Latin American Petroleum Workers, held in Tampico, Mexico, on 22-26 September. The Congress named Faria a member of the Committee for the Defense of Latin American Petroleum Workers.

During his long imprisonment from May 1950 until January 1958, Faria served international Communism well as a symbol of martyrdom and a subject for propaganda. The CTAL was especially active in this regard, and in 1954 Lombardo issued orders to all affiliates that December 1954 was to be observed as "Crusade to Free Jesus Faria" month. The idea reportedly originated in the headquarters of WFTU's Trade Union International of Chemical, Oil and Allied Workers. Radio Moscow dedicated various radio programs to him (for example, on 5 July 1955). In late 1956 the WFTU Executive Council, meeting in Sofia, approved a resolution "to send messages demanding the release from jail of Faria" to the Venezuelan Government.

#### Front Organizations

An integral part of the international Communist movement in every country is the web of front organizations created by Moscow's orders. Each constituent organization is theoretically independent but in reality is completely controlled by the Kremlin and exists solely for carrying out Soviet orders, whether these be in the field of propaganda, subversion or espionage. Venezuela has not escaped this blight.

The first organization in which Venezuelan Communists participated was the Anti-Imperialist League, founded by the Anti-Imperialist Congress, which met in Brussels in February 1927 at the call of Willy Maenzberg, the well-known Comintern agent. The Latin American delegates included Gustavo Machado, as well as Julio Mella (Cuba), Victor Cedovilla (Argentina), and Eudasio Ravines (Peru). A Continental Committee of the League was subsequently established in Mexico with Mella as its leading figure and Machado as a member.

Following the Comintern's Vith Congress in 1928, at which a resolution praising the Sandino revolt in Nicaragua was adopted, Latin American Communists associated with the League organized a "Hands Off Nicaragua" Committee (Manos Fuera de Nicaragua--Mafuenic), which undertook to raise funds for Sandino. The \$1,000 that was raised was sent to Sandino through Machado.



A currently functioning front organization is the Comité Venezolano Por la Paz y la Democracia, an affiliate of the World Peace Council, founded on 17 November 1948 by General Jose Rafael Gabaldon, Mario Briceno Irigorri, Jose Antonio Marturet, Lucila Palacios, Rafael Angarita Arevalo, and Luis Villalba Villalba. Other prominent members are Miguel Otero Silva, Luis Esteban Rey, Vicente and Jose Gerbasi, Antonio Marquez Salas, Carlos Irazabal, Isidoro Valles, Eduardo Gallegos Mancera, Jose Maria Sanchez Mijares (its Secretary General), Gabriel Bracho, and Dr. J. P. Reyes Baena. Most of the persons mentioned also are prominent PCV members, although a few are only fellow travelers.

The Comité, like its counterparts in other countries, functions primarily as an outlet for Soviet propaganda. The Comité, however, also serves as an arm of the Soviet intelligence organization, collecting such information as is requested by Moscow to supplement that collected by the PCV. Because this aspect of the Comité's activities is a closely guarded secret, it is not known whether the information collected is channeled to Moscow through the Paris headquarters of the Pro-Peace Movement or through the Mexican Committee.

Another current front is the Venezuelan Association of Democratic Lawyers, organized in Caracas on 1 September 1949 as an affiliate of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL). Its members comprise a handful of lawyers, most of them members of PCV. Its president, Professor Octavio Andrade Delgado, and one of its other officers, Pedro Barrios Guzman, also are members of the PCV's National Labor Commission for the Federal District.

The front over which Soviet control was most evident, however, was the Instituto Cultural Venezolano-Soviético (ICVS), which was organized on 24 April 1946 and came to an end on 13 June 1952 when it was closed by police a few hours after Venezuela broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. During its existence, ICVS functioned both as an intelligence collection agency and as a channel for the distribution of Communist propaganda. Its Boletín de Información, for example, was published under the supervision and at the expense of the Soviet Embassy. The Institute also distributed Cultura Soviética, published by the Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Mexicano-Ruso in Mexico City.

Throughout its lifetime, the Institute's leading figure and director was Carlos Augusto Leon Arcecha, who was then and is today a prominent member of the PCV. Leon was paid for his



services by the Soviet Embassy and acted as go-between and front man in matters concerning ICVS for Lev Krylov, Soviet cultural attache in Caracas until 1948.

Leon has traveled abroad both as a PCV agent and as a representative of other front groups. In 1952 he visited Prague and continued on to Moscow to attend the World Economic Conference (April 1952) as a delegate of the Venezuelan Pro-Peace movement. In 1953 he attended both Stalin's funeral and the 3rd World Youth Congress in Bucharest, 25-30 July. During this trip behind the Iron Curtain he maintained contact with the West through Jonas Millan Boadas, who also attended the youth congress. In Moscow Leon met with CPSU cultural officials and also persons in charge of Communist agitation in the Americas, to whom he explained the serious financial and tactical problems then facing the PCV.

A second prominent member of ICVS was Gabriel Oscar Bracho Montiel, who served as its last president. He is a well-known painter, humorist, editor-publisher and odontologist from the State of Zulia. A member of the PCV, he was also a founding member of the Pro-Peace Committee, which he represented at the Continental Cultural Congress in Santiago, Chile, 27 April 1953.

This discussion, which has touched on only some aspects of the problem, nevertheless indicates the extent of the roots put down in Venezuela by the international Communist movement. In the face of these revelations the current PCV claim that it is strictly national in character is unacceptable. It is to be hoped that the people of Venezuela will not permit themselves to be deluded.

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